



# Probiotic Foods

## What are Probiotics?

Probiotics are beneficial forms of gut bacteria that help stimulate the natural digestive juices and enzymes that keep our digestive organs functioning properly. The benefits of these “good bacteria” are well documented and include improved digestion and immune function, improved vitamin synthesis and reduced risk of diseases including Crohn's and ulcerative colitis.



### Yogurt

Yogurt is a rich source of probiotics, but be careful: Not all yogurt contains probiotics. Most brands that do will advertise this fact on the label. Powerful strains of probiotics found in yogurt include lactobacillus and bifidobacteria. The more different strains of these bacteria, the better, so look for this information on the label and compare brands when possible. Though store-bought yogurt does contain probiotics, some of these bacteria are inevitably destroyed by the pasteurization process and they are often filled with sugars and syrups. For a product containing the most live and active cultures, making yogurt at home is ideal.



### Miso Soup

Miso is one the mainstays of traditional Japanese medicine and is commonly used in macrobiotic cooking as a digestive regulator. Made from fermented rye, beans, rice or barley, adding a tablespoon of miso to some hot water makes an excellent, quick, probiotic-rich soup.



### Kefir

Kefir is a product very similar to yogurt; it is usually made from milk but can be made with other liquids such as coconut milk or water. Kefir, though, has the advantage of being 99 percent lactose free, making it a good option for those who are lactose intolerant. Additionally, kefir is among the richest sources of probiotics available, with three times the amount of probiotics typically found in yogurt. High in lactobacilli and bifidus bacteria, kefir is also rich in antioxidants. Look for a good, organic version at your local health food store



### Kombucha Tea

Kombucha tea is produced by fermenting sweet black tea with a flat culture of bacteria and yeasts known as the kombucha mushroom. The result is a probiotic-rich beverage with dozens of reported health benefits, including boosting the body's immune system. This probiotic drink has been used for centuries and is believed to help increase your energy, enhance your wellbeing, and maybe even help you lose weight. However, kombucha tea may not be the best fit for everyone, especially those who've had problems with candida.



### Sauerkraut

Made from fermented cabbage (and sometimes other vegetables), sauerkraut is not only extremely rich in healthy live cultures, but might also help with reducing allergy symptoms. Sauerkraut is also rich in vitamins B, A, E and C.



### **Pickles**

Believe it or not, the common green pickle is an excellent food source of probiotics. The less commercialized the better, but most pickles will have some microbial value.



### **Microalgae**

Although this isn't a food per se, it's great to add to your morning smoothie.

Microalgae refers to superfood ocean-based plants such as spirulina, chlorella, and blue-green algae.



### **Kimchi**

An Asian form of pickled sauerkraut, kimchi is an extremely spicy and sour fermented cabbage, typically served alongside meals in Korea. Besides beneficial bacteria, kimchi is also a great source of beta-carotene, calcium, iron and vitamins A, C, B1 and B2. Kimchi is one of the best probiotic foods you can add to your diet, assuming you can handle the spice, of course.



### **Dark chocolate**

Delicious and nutritious – really! Dark chocolate contains probiotics and antioxidants to keep your stomach healthy and your sweet tooth satisfied.



### **Olives**

Olives in brine have large amounts of probiotics because the brine allows the probiotic cultures to thrive. Snack on your favorite type of olive or add to a salad or pizza.